

Contributions

LOYALTY

R. R. TEETER

We hear of loyalty to country, loyalty to Christ, etc. But waiving all other divisions of loyalty, let us briefly consider "loyalty to church." I mean denominational loyalty. Here I will make a grave charge—the members of the Brethren church, in general, are sadly lacking in this species of loyalty. They may be loyal to their political party, loyal to their secret order, as much so as anyone, but when it comes to loyalty to their church they are far outstripped by many other people.

It is not liberality of mind nor broadness of intellect to have no set convictions. Neither is it narrowness nor bigotry to have firm convictions and to contend for them. We sometimes hear our German Baptist brethren spoken of as narrow and bigoted. This may be true in individual cases, but in many other instances it is loyalty to church and this loyalty is having a telling effect. It is loyalty to church that gave them over \$18,000 mission money last year. It is loyalty to church that gives them an annual income of \$10,000 from their publishing house. It is loyalty to church that furnishes their colleges a thousand or more students.

Why are our missions not better supported? It is a lack of loyalty. Why does our publishing house not give us better returns? It is a deficiency in loyalty rather than in cash. Why does our college not have a more telling effect? It is because of failure in loyalty. It makes me feel ashamed to learn that we have so many brethren who have not enough Christian patriotism to pay for their church paper. It grieves me to know that we have members who are able to send their children to our own college, but because of the difference of a few dollars in car fare, disregard all semblance of loyalty and send them elsewhere.

This may sound harshly, but there is a way to stop the sound. Simply be loyal.

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THE LOVE OF GOD

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The love of God, like God, is incomprehensible to the mind of man. In Christ we see the Father, and in him also we see the love of the Father. We come to know God and to feel his love as we (come) learn Christ. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Christ in his sacrifice is the measure of God's love. God so loved that he gave his Son. The extent of that so who can measure? Gethsemane and

Calvary are the visible phenomena, but a redeemed and glorified humanity will be the real and lasting results of that love so great.

Like the sun which fills all space with its light, so God fills all the universe with his love. What we know and feel of the sunshine is what comes to this earth. All we feel and know of God's love is what comes to us thro Christ. As the sunlight which we receive is sufficient for all our purposes so Christ is sufficient to fill our needs of a divine love.

The love of God like pure light may be separated into various component factors. One element is self suffering, or self-sacrifice. God gave his Son because of love. A second element is unselfishness. "For our sakes he became poor." "He came not to be ministered unto but to minister." A third element is sympathy. "He had compassion upon the multitude." Trust and endurance may be reckoned as factors in the divine love. This is the love of God as seen in Christ and is one of the greatest evidences of his divinity. His love was more than human, it was divine.

We must not confound divine love with human love in such a manner as to consider the latter (as) to be an attribute of the former. Human love is a creation of God, but is no more God's love than man is God. Both man and his love are susceptible of change.

However blessed the love of God may be, the individual life can only be blest by it when brought into right relations to it.

Many men are like the philosopher in his study writing very learnedly about the sun, while others are like the child upon the lawn revelling in the light and warmth of the sun. The one knows very much about the sun but the other is getting all the benefits. It is not so much what we know about God's love as it is what we possess and enjoy of it. The heart of man was formed for love as the eye was formed for light. The heart which is never exercised by the divine love will soon become incapable of loving. Dear reader, have you opened your heart to God's love? Has that love given you higher purposes, nobler aims in life? Has it awakened in your heart a great love for humanity? If not then you know not God. You know not the great purpose of God in giving you being. We talk and write much about our conversion. We talk about "our experiences," and "our peace." All of which are profitable but if we have not God's love in our hearts they may prove a delusion and a snare. There is but one way by which the word assures us that we may have assurance. And that is when the love of God is in possession of our hearts. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples,

that ye have love one for another." You say, oh, yes, I do love my brethren. Are you sure? O! yes, I have a warm affection for them. I delight myself by their company, I take sweet council with them, we commune together, we live in peace. O! yes, I love my brethren. But all this like "our experience" we too often measure by the human standard instead of the divine. The divine standard is, "as I have loved you." Christ loved us to the extent of dying for us. Do we measure our love by that standard? Can we measure our love by any other and be safe? "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." The Spirit of Christ is not "an experience" or a "peace" but the love of God which was in him. The greatest manifestation of God in Christ was the love of God in him (Christ.) The greatest evidence of Christ in us is that same love working thro us and in us. John 17:26. If our Christian conduct were measured by this the true and surely a safe criterion, would our missionaries go begging? Would the destitute and the hungry go naked and starving? Would the College and Publishing House be long unendowed? Would preachers be compelled to preach for a meager living and wait two, three or six months on payment? Would there be bickerings, envyings and estrangements among members of the same congregations?

I do not ask these questions to condemn anybody. I ask them because the condition of things as they are seem so contrary to what God would have them. Surely his love in us would right them. What then must be the inevitable conclusion. God is not working to will and to do his good pleasure in us. Is God to blame? Is his love any less omnipotent? Is it any less life and power than 1900 years ago? Verily, we answer, no. What then? The lack. God help us to own it, is upon our part. Does not this lack arise from our improper relation to the love of God? May there not be a great difference between the love of God and the love for God. We may have a great love for God as we may also have a great love for man. But it may be a selfish love. It may be an unregenerate love. It is not though directed toward God the love of God. God love is our love transformed by faith in Christ and the operations of the Holy Spirit so that it is no longer our love for God but the love of God working in us. Our love for God may be likened unto a cake of ice reflecting the image and light of the sun. In the reflection there is neither warmth or life. Nothing to give life to vegetation around. Where the sun has melted the ice and caused the water to be transformed into vapor which is taken up by the air and is again deposited in the form of dew or rain, then it becomes a source of life to vegetation. So with man. To